THE NATION'S DUTY:

A THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

PITTSBURGH,

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1862,

BY THE PASTOR,

REV. HERRICK JOHNSON.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY W. S. HAVEN, CORNER OF WOOD AND THIRD STREETS.

1862.

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PITTSBURGH, November 28th, 1862.

Rev. HERRICK JOHNSON:

Dear Sir—The undersigned, members of the Third Presbyterian Congregation, request a copy of your Thanksgiving Sermon for publication.

Respectfully yours,

BARCLAY PRESTON,	C. B. M. SMITH,
CHAS. S. BISSELL,	GEO. ALBREE,
JOHN BISSELL,	ALEXANDER GORDON,
JOHN B. JONES,	GEORGE WOODS,
H. W. WILLIAMS,	JOSEPH DILWORTH,
J. F. GRIGGS,	WM. THAW,
WM. DIGBY,	JOHN B. SEMPLE,
D. MARSHALL,	SAMUEL W. SEMPLE,
WM. W. DICKSON,	GEO H. CHRISTY,
J. F. KEELER,	RICHARD EDWARDS,
DANIEL BUSHNELL,	GRINFILL BLAKE.

PITTSBURGH, November 28th, 1862.

Messrs. C. B. M. SMITH, ALEXANDER GORDON, GEO. ALBREE, GEORGE WOODS, and others:

Gentlemen—The manuscript is at your service.

Yours, very truly,

H. JOHNSON.

DISCOURSE.

"THE SECRET THINGS BELONG UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD: BUT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE REVEALED BELONG UNTO US AND TO OUR CHILDREN FOR EVER, THAT WE MAY DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW."

Deut. xxix. 29.

THERE they stood on that day, to the east of Jordan, all of them before the Lord their God; the captains of their tribes, their elders and their officers, with all the men of Israel; their little ones, their wives, and the stranger that was in their camp, from the hewer of wood unto the drawer of water, to enter into covenant with the Lord their God, and to take the oath of allegiance. Forty years before, in Horeb, they had first vowed their vows, and then, under the guidance of the pillar of cloud and of fire, had taken up their strange way through the wilderness. They sinned, they suffered, they wandered, until a generation died, when at last, in the land of Moab, they gathered to renew the covenant and to ratify the oath with the Lord their God, before crossing the Jordan to enter upon their promised inheritance. There they received the dying charge of their aged lawgiver and leader.

The scene lacked the sublimity and awfulness of that at Sinai, when the mount glowed with the fire of God and trembled at the presence of his power; but it was peculiarly solemn and impressive, and well calculated to fix in the hearts of the children of Israel the covenant into which they there entered. After having repeated the words of the covenant, Moses charged them, by all that they held dear on earth, by all that they hoped for their children and their children's children, by the blessing and the curse of God, to keep it inviolate. In the midst of this solemn charge occur the words of my text: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

The occasion of their utterance was this. Moses had warned the people against turning away from the Lord their God to go and serve the gods of the nations round about, for this would be a root amongst them bearing only gall and wormwood. Notwithstanding all God's love and care for them, though they were his chosen, his covenant ones, dearer to him than the apple of his eye, yet if they should break oath, and trample his covenant under foot, the Lord would not spare them, "but his anger and jealousy would smoke against them, and all the curses that were written in the book would lie upon them, and their name would be blotted out from under heaven—so that the generation to come, and the stranger from a far land, should say, when they saw the plagues of the land, that the whole land thereof was

brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it was not sown, and did not bear, and that no grass grew therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath; even all nations should say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" The desolation would be matter of astonishment to coming generations. They would marvel, upon reading the history and the promise, to see Israel thus consumed. *This land*, of all others—the land of Canaan, the glory of all lands—the land set apart by prophecy and promise as God's choice for his chosen—this holy land, called Immanuel's, where only the true God was worshiped, to be thus visited with judgments, and utterly consumed! Well might the generations ask, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus? and what meaneth the heat of this great anger? You see, my hearers, it is no new thing for God to let loose the terrible enginery of his judgments upon a land that he has signally favored; upon a people that he has signally blessed. It was his dear Jerusalem, his chosen, to whom he said, "O children of Israel, you only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

But in answer to the question as to the meaning of the desolation, Moses adds, "Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers." That is a true answer, and that is enough. God never forsakes until he has been forsaken. It is only across a rebellious land that he drives his fiery

chariots. But this may not be deemed sufficient. It may still be asked, Why such a miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage, such protracted preparation, such long pupilage? Why such a constant succession of miracles, and such a vast array of power, and such crowning proofs of love, to preserve and honor and bless a people whose speedy, entire and damning apostasy he so plainly foresaw would necessitate their ruin? Why give them a land that he knew his judgments would so soon make a blight and a desolation? Why did he single out and raise up such a people, only to scatter them abroad with his curses, to make their name a hissing and a by-word? Why did he not, by his sovereign and overruling providence, prevent the wicked apostasy and consequent ruin? Or what has he yet in store for a people, upon whom he has thus visited, almost to utter desolation, the heat of his great anger? Ah, these are points beyond our knowledge. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! We have to do with that which is before us—with what is revealed. It is not our province to inquire into the secret counsels of the Almighty. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God."

My hearers, you can hardly have failed to see the force and application of all this to the present hour and ourselves. This has been a land blessed of God. For growth in all the resources that go to make a great people, it has no parallel in the world. Not so signally favored by open and direct divine interposition as Israel of old, yet through the influence and agency of second causes, God has often and in a marked manner interfered

in our behalf. In the orderings of Providence our forefathers fled oppression, and sought in the wilds of this western continent, freedom of worship. After a long and often painful discipline, we were born a free people, and through a baptism of blood took our place among the nations of the earth. Heaven seemed then to open the flood-gates of blessing. We grew rich and strong. We were a favored people above all the earth. We seemed set apart to be crowned, as Israel of old, with God's best gifts. We widened our domain until its western border was kissed by the waters of the Pacific, and across it, back and forth, was echoed and re-echoed the music of two oceans. The land looked up to heaven, and smiled, as if in answer to the smile of God. We were self-governed, and yet we loved and obeyed law. We loved law, *because we loved liberty*. We had a free school, an open Bible, an untrammeled conscience. Over the wide world, our national emblem was known and honored. All eyes compelled to weep at wrong suffered under the iron hoof of power, turned toward that starry banner with admiration. All hearts bleeding under the oppressions of tyranny, and yearning for deliverance, beat toward it with high hope. And along with the standard of the Nation, we carried the standard of the Cross. We sought upon heathen shores to win the bloodless victories of faith, and to illumine the night of pagan darkness with the light of the everlasting gospel. With all our weaknesses and wickednesses, we were recognized as a Christian people, worshiping the true God. And it *did* seem as if we were God's chosen—as if he had raised us

up, and honored and blessed us, and crowned us with every good gift of his providence and grace, and placed us foremost among the instrumentalities for a world's conversion, that through us He might accomplish his purposes of redemption, and make our freedom as citizens of the Great Republic the precursor to the whole human race of the freedom wherewith Christ makes his people free as citizens of the kingdom of God.

But we are fallen upon troublous times. The nation is bleeding at every pore. The land no longer laughs to greet the sun, nor smiles in answer to the smile of God, but in vestments of gore and blood, sends up a bitter wail of agony, that saddens the listening heavens, and chills as with the touch of death the hopes of millions. We are being scourged by God's judgments. He has unsheathed the sword, and a hundred thousand corpses strewn over our hills and plains tell us as no words can, that "*He taketh it not in vain.*" The land is being desolated as with the breath of a destroyer. The energies of the nation are wasting away. Already, among a large class in the Old World, our name is a hissing and a by-word. The anger of the Lord and his jealousy seem to smoke against us. And when we ask, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" the ready answer is, *Because we have forsaken the covenant of the Lord our God.* We have proved unfaithful to our trust, and grown to be a corrupt and God-dishonoring nationality. That is true, and that is enough. Yet it does not seem to satisfy us. Why *this land*, foremost in all that elevates humanity and glorifies God, though it

be fruitful of much that is evil—this favored, prospered, heaven-honored and heaven-blessed land, where a world's hopes were centred, for which ascended the prayers of God's people of all nations, to which came the oppressed of all kingdoms, upon which rested the smile of Jehovah, and in which dwelt the freest people on earth? Why this land, apparently raised up for some great purpose, that God seemed to have singled out as his chosen heritage, and to have purposed to use as the mighty instrumentality of ushering in the millennial day? Why not other lands more guilty, and more deserving to be scourged by the red right hand of war, and less likely in their ruin to crush hope out of human hearts and to roll back the tide of civilization and Christianity? And why so *sore* a judgment? Why so *hot* the breath of his indignation? Why is he leading us in this strange way, thick strewn with human corpses, taking the Nation's very life, when if he had kindled his anger but a little, before we needed the sterner judgments, we might have been saved this awful baptism of tears and blood?

Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? His judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out. This is not that with which we have to do. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.* If he choose to withhold the revelation of his purpose, so that you are blinded and lost in the chaos of events, and unable to trace a gracious providence in them, what is that to thee? Go thy way. Canst thou by searching find out God? The secret things belong unto *Him.* Only the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that

we may do all the words of this law. In other words, we are to be concerned with what is before us, clearly, fully, unmistakably, with what God has given us to know, and not with prurient curiosity to seek out the secret things pertaining to the divine motive and procedure and purpose in the stern judgments of the hour. And I stand here, to-day, as a minister of the New Testament, to utter my Christian protest and to warn you, my hearers, against the doubt and the unbelief—yea, the infidelity of such a course. What if we cannot see why *this land*, before all others, should be blighted and blasted with the curse of civil war—this fair heritage of freedom, from which went out for the uplifting and healing of the nations, more of the love of liberty, the light of religion and the truth of God, than from any other land under the broad heavens! What if we cannot see why we, the loyal portion of it, should so often meet with disaster and defeat! Why the Nation's fate should still seem to tremble in the balance! Why a God of justice, the mission of whose Son into our world was to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, whose own voice has bidden us undo the heavy burdens, break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free—why He should so often have apparently taken the side of the oppressor, whose openly espoused cause is human slavery, and given him power to stand at the very gates of the free North, flushed with victory, to fling his insults at us, and give food for the scorners and maligners of a free government across the ocean! And what if we cannot tell what the end shall be! What if this day of thanksgiving does not give us

an unclouded sky, nor enable us yet to trace the sure design of God in these mighty upheavings! We are to let these secret things alone. They belong to the Lord. Our business is with what is revealed. The present hour has its present duties, and the call of God is for the nation to do them. There is a covenant between us and God, between us and Zion, between us and the State, and we are to do all the words of this law.

There are those who think themselves fully competent to trace God's great design in this matter, and who imagine that they distinctly see the one grand, only purpose of His providence; and so they fold their arms, satisfied that whatever is done or left undone, there is a God of justice, and the conflict will issue in freedom. Pride is unabated, sin is unconfessed, no recognition is made of the need of judgment here at the North, and still the confident utterance is, "It cannot be, that with such vast resources, such marvelous appliances, and *in such a cause*, we should be finally defeated." How do we know that? Where is the evidence of it? In divine record? In historic fact? I tell you, nay! God often chooses "the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, doth God choose, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: *that no flesh should glory in his presence.*" Again and again has he allowed success to be emblazoned on the banners of the marshaled hosts of wickedness; and even when that success seemed to human view as if it would blot out His own name from under heaven for ever. He spared not his dear Jerusa-

lem, his loved and chosen Israel—he 'bated not one jot or tittle of the wrath he poured out so pitilessly upon them. Though he had gathered them into the land of promise with lavish expenditure of miracle, and by his own right arm had brought them victorious through many a conflict, yet when their preservation seemed essential to his glory, and when they were the only nation on the wide earth having a knowledge of the true God, and when they fought to save the government he himself had established, and in the cause he himself had so often espoused, he allowed them to be overrun, and vanquished, and enslaved, and some of them scattered to the four winds. And by whom? The victors were heathen—they were tyrants—they were slaveholders—they hated the God of Israel, and made bold to say so, laughing his invoked aid to scorn. And yet he gave them success. Who shall say the right always triumphs? Look at Hungary. Look at Poland. Look at old-time Italy. Oh, in one aspect of the world's affairs,

"Careless seems the great Avenger;
History's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness,
'Twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth for ever on the Scaffold—
Wrong for ever on the Throne—
Yet"—

and blessed be God that we have his word for it, and that it is true—

"Yet that Scaffold *sways the Future*,
And, behind the dim Unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own."

We know that the right and the true will ultimately triumph. But we do not know at what cost. It is possible that we have not seen a tithe of the evil that is to come upon us. *God can do without this Republic!* Are we fools and madmen, to stand guilty of the high arrogance of claiming that he must save the nation, in any event, if he would save the world! It is my hope, my prayer, my heart's cry to God, that he *will* save it. I *believe* he will. But who knows when and how the salvation shall be? Has he not already led us in a way that we knew not? Has he not made foolish our wisdom, defeating all our prophecies and thwarting all our plans? We know not why he has raised up the nation for such a time as this. We know not the divine reasoning on the subject—the grand design—and what are to be the far-reaching results. These are the secret things that belong to the Lord our God. And no human foot has right or power to cross the threshold of His council chamber. "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain."

Let us stop, then, our infidel questioning, our heavy-tongued murmuring, our vain guesses, our ambitious attempts to interpret the ways of God, our arrogant dictation and still more arrogant prophecies. Let us address ourselves to the duties of the hour. The things that are revealed—that are clearly before us and pressing upon us with their imperative obligation—these belong to us and to our children, to do all the words of this law.

We are summoned this day, by the Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to "*solemn Prayer*

and Thanksgiving to the Almighty," and the Governors of nearly all the Middle and Northern States have set apart by public proclamation, the same day for a like purpose. There can be no question as to the eminent fitness of this summons on the part of our State authorities. If ever a nation was called of God to its altars, it is this. If ever duties were clearly revealed as duties of the day and the hour, they are the duties devolving upon us in the present posture of our affairs, to pray and give thanks. These surely are not the secret things that belong to God, but the things revealed, that belong to us.

The nation is in mourning by reason of God's judgments. We cannot, if we would, shut our eyes to the fact. We are sowing blood. *He* only knows what the harvest shall be. The Great Reaper, the Lord of the harvest, keeps his own counsels. But why is he here to blight and to blast us? Why do his anger and his jealousy smoke against us? Why is our fair land swept with the hot breath of his indignation? The plain answer is, Because we have forsaken the covenant of the Lord our God. We have sinned. Most men would be willing to make recognition of this fact. But we need to feel it. We, the North. Not only our enemies—who have coined the sweat and blood of the poor slave into golden eagles, and who, to continue and extend the foul wrong and to gratify a corrupt and dominant lust for power and pelf, have lifted their traitorous hands and aimed their traitorous blows at the Nation's heart. God knows they have enough to answer for. And they *are* answering for it. They are illustrating to-day that true saying of Lamar-

tine, "Man never yet fastened one end of a chain round the neck of his brother, that God's own hand did not fasten the other end round the neck of the oppressor."

"For He that looketh high and wide,
Nor pauses in His plan,
Will take the sun out of the sky
Ere freedom out of man."

But the North, too, is being scored with judgments. The sword is at our own breasts. The lightnings are blasting here. Why is this? Why not remove this gigantic iniquity of slavery, and punish its upholders in some other way, if that were all His purpose in this civil war! Why do *our* sons, and brothers, and fathers lie under the sod of the battle-field, and the earth still drink up their blood. Ah, God would make us feel that *we* have sinned. He has led us through a year and a half of conflict down into the valley of humiliation, and down into the valley of the shadow of death, that we may feel it. And this, my hearers, first of all and more than all, I deem to be the need of the hour: that we recognize and acknowledge our desert of judgment, and at our public and private altars humbly pray Almighty God to forgive us, and to make us feel our dependence, and in the fitting language of our Governor's proclamation, "to help and govern us in his steadfast fear and love," and "to put into our minds good desires, so that by his continual help we may have a right judgment in all things, and *grace to hate the thing which is evil.*" We have *not* hated it. If ever anything was made plain in God's word, it is that

his judgments come for sins. And look at ours—our pride, leading us to boast ability to cope with any power under the heavens, while forgetting the Power above the heavens—our corruption, that even now, when the country is in great throes of agony, is not shamed to decency, but still plies its trade and barters the Nation's life-blood for a few pieces of silver—our profaneness, our Sabbath-breaking—our connivance at the traffic in human beings, stamped with the image of God—the slave-trade, under the ban of the civilized world. It was from a Northern port that a large proportion of the vessels sailed to engage in the infamous traffic, and in a Northern city that extensive organizations existed for its protection—while Northern officials winked at the damning crime. And more than this: a servile apprehension lest our political idol, the Union, should be broken, made cowards of well nigh all of us. We feared man rather than God. We paid less regard to right than expediency. We nursed by cowardly compromise the hydra that now threatens to crush us in its deadly coils; and we polluted our hands with the touch of the unholy thing. Of all this we must make confession. The whole Nation's duty is first to God. And it must be a reality. Each must feel that he counts one in this return to the Most High. Oh that I could press it upon your consciences, and burn it into your memories, and weigh your hearts with it. *If God's judgments are upon us for our pride and our iniquity, then we must be humble, and penitent, and prayerful, acknowledging our dependence, and renouncing our sins, or* THOSE JUDGMENTS MAY BE TO OUR UTTER DESTRUCTION, AND THE NATION LOST!

The God of justice can still poise the scales evenly, and yet blot out our name from under heaven, as he did that of his chosen Israel. To your altars, then, freemen of the North! Oh that I could, as with the trump of God, summon the Nation to prayer. I urge you, my hearers, as you love this dear land of freedom, as you wish to be true to God and your country, go to your altars, and wring victory from Jehovah there. God says, "Woe to them that stay on horses and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord." God says, "Turn ye unto Him from whom ye have revolted. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword." Do we believe God? Then let us turn our eyes unto Him from whom cometh our help, and pray like Nehemiah of old, "Now therefore, O God, strengthen our hands."

And having prayed and continuing to pray, let us *give thanks.* Having made our confession and besought the Lord of hosts to spare this heritage of freedom and make us hate whatever is evil in it, we ought to bring our thank offerings, and send up a glad song of gratitude to God, that *things are no worse with us than they are;* yea, that blessings have come with the judgments, that in the midst of the cloud and the storm, and while the heavens have seemed surcharged with thunderbolts of wrath, a flood of golden sheen has been poured down upon us from the throne of Mercy, and saved the Nation from despair. "Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires." Praise God out of the midst of the flames, my hearers. There

is reason for thanksgiving. Shame on the heavy-tongued murmurers that can find no cause of gratitude, even in this time of war. Think what might have been. If, instead of sending only the sword, which is but one of his four sore judgments, God had let loose *all* the terrible enginery of his hot indignation, and driven across our rebellious land with all his fiery chariots together. What then? What if the "Pestilence that walketh in darkness," had been allowed to creep stealthily down the Atlantic coast and along the Gulf and up the Mississippi, mowing down our citizen soldiery in great swaths, blanching the cheeks and unnerving the arms of brave men who are there to yield to no foe but Death! What if lean, gaunt, ghastly Famine had also been sent through the land, and the cry had gone up from a million mouths for food, and the glare of the pitiless heavens, and the blight of the barren earth, had made men mad with hunger, and led starving mothers to eat their own flesh! Such things have been. Oh, that with the sword He has not sent also the famine and the noisome beast and the pestilence, let us thank God, my hearers. Thank him for our broad acres of golden grain, for the "garners choked with the harvest;" thank him for causing the earth so abundantly to bring forth her increase, that we can scatter our bread upon all waters, and be almoners to the nations; thank him for averting the pestilential breath of the destroyer; thank him for looking "so favorably on the toil of his children, that industry has thriven among us and labor has its reward; "and thank him that the demon of destruction, with the iron hoofs

of war, has not been *here*, desolating our Northern fields and ravaging our Northern homes—that the noise of battle is still heard from afar, and not at our hearthstones and firesides.

Were there nothing else, surely all this is enough to be thankful for, and to cause us all with heart and voice to praise the Lord this day in his holy temple. But there are other signs of good. Through the thick clouds hanging over us struggle other beams of light, and the darkness seems almost turning into day.

"*Sentence of another Slave Trader*" was, but the other day, one of the significant captions at the head of the telegraphic column of our newspapers. And thoughtful men, who took in the full meaning of that message, knew that the Nation, in spite of all things, was making moral progress. We had been trafficking in men's flesh and blood and bones and brains. We were fitting out our ships for a merchandise, that Heaven's laws branded with the curse of God, and our laws classed with piracy. We were doing it in open day, doing it successfully, extensively — thirty thousand Africans being landed on Cuba's coast in one year. Gold bought it success! gold, coined from the sinews and muscles of *men*—men sold like cattle in the shambles. It secured the connivance of marshals, the favor of prosecuting attorneys, the bribery of juries and the technical objections of judges, so that perjured minions of Satan plied their brutal trade almost unmolested, laughing to defiance the laws for the suppression of a traffic that scarcely has a peer, I verily believe, in all the occupations of hell! All this less than two short years ago. *Now*, so far as this free Re-

public is concerned, *the African slave-trade is doomed!* Six months ago the Seward-Lyons Treaty was ratified, and nevermore, thank God, nevermore will men drive under the sacred folds of our starry flag this most inhuman of all earthly work.

And still other lines of light appear, that stretch themselves clear across our darkened sky, from horizon to horizon, arching the black vault with a bow of benediction and promise. Our representatives, in Congress assembled, have passed an act that has received the signature of the President, and is now the law of the land, forever prohibiting involuntary servitude, save for crime, in all the territories that are now, or that shall hereafter be annexed to these United States. That soil stretching up and down our western border, to be peopled yet, we may believe, by thronging millions, is never to be trodden by a slave; for it has been consecrated to freedom, and the rite of consecration has received the sacred sanction of law. Never again are we to hear the roll-call of slaves and the crack of the whip of the master, under the walls of our Capitol! Missouri has just chosen a legislature inimical to slavery, ready to embarrass, tax and trammel the institution to the fullest extent within the limits of the constitution, and to do all in its power to rid the State entirely of the curse. Missouri, that but yesterday would not brook the calmest discussion of the subject! Missouri, that but yesterday sent its armed bands with murderous intent to crush out the freemen of Kansas, and to force upon that young sister State the curse that blighted its own soil! And more than this, and more than all: on the first day of January, 1863, "if

the power of this rebellion be not sooner broken, "a nation shall be born in a day;" born into a new life—born to freedom—born to the rights they have been robbed of these centuries, and the jubilee shout of three millions shall thunder to the world that THE GREAT REPUBLIC IS RIGHTING ITSELF WITH GOD! No one supposes that freedom will be actually realized by all these millions at once. "The force of the act of emancipation is," as a recent writer well argues, "that it *commits the country to this justice.* It is not a measure that admits of being taken back. Done, it cannot be undone by a new administration. By it the President has paroled all the slaves in America; they will no more fight against us; and it relieves our race once for all of its crime and false position. We have planted ourselves on a law of nature"—I might add, a law of God—

> "If that fail,
> The pillared firmament is rottenness,
> And earth's base built on stubble."

And the voice of our Chief Magistrate is heard enjoining the observance by our army and navy of another law of God, and ordering that Sunday labor in camp and field and on ship board "be reduced to the measure of strict necessity," thus making official recognition of the conscience of the nation, and of its moral obligations, and proving that there is a Sabbath even in a time of war. To every Christian heart it is cause of devout thanksgiving to-day, that the spirit in which our institutions were founded, is the spirit in which they are defended, Lincoln, as the commander-in-chief of our armies, repeating

the noble words of Washington in 1776, "In this time of public distress, men may find enough to do in the service of God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality." "The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and privileges of his country."

There is another occasion of gratitude to God on the part of the Nation to-day, to which I would briefly advert: that the free Northmen of this Continent have proved themselves worthy of freedom by their respect for rulers, their regard for authority and their obedience to law. Notwithstanding the evil machinations of men and presses in sympathy with treason, notwithstanding the power invested in our armed hosts to establish at will a dictatorship or a military despotism, we have seen them, obedient to the behests of constituted authority, submitting to the removal of an unquestionably popular, and, to a large portion of the army, almost idolized chief, and following another lawfully appointed leadership, with cheerful alacrity and with as willing and brave hearts, as ready and strong arms, as ever general led to battle-field in this world. I do not pronounce on the merits of the respective officers, or on the wisdom of the change—it is not my province in this official position—but I do say, the wheel of our grand army into line under a new chief at the bidding of the Government, was sublime! I expect to see no such regard for authority and obedience to law, while I live. Ah, here at least, in the free North, the spirit of loyalty is a reality. We are lovers of law! And we love law, because we love liberty! Thank God to-day,

my hearers, that both these principles have taken such deep root in the American heart; for had it been otherwise, long ere this law would have changed to lawlessness, and anarchy or tyranny would be holding high carnival over the ruins of the Great Republic!

Oh, there is reason for thankfulness! Amid all the gloom and the desertness, amid all the waste and the weariness, though the storm yet rages, and the sword is smiting us still—and your sons and brothers are there, my people, in the smoke and din and shock of war, with the rattle of musketry, and the rain of shot and shell, and the shout of the onset and the groans of the dying, there is abundant occasion to go to our altars, and before God pour out our hearts in thanksgiving—for all over our cloud-swept sky the stars are shining; holy, loving, peaceful stars, that give promise, like Bethlehem's, of the coming of the Prince!

And thus having urged you, in accordance with the recommendation of the Governor of this Commonwealth, "to solemn Prayer and Thanksgiving to the Almighty," I cannot close this discourse without brief reference to another duty—the distinctive duty owed to the country. We are to wring the victory from God in our closets, and then to wring it from the enemy on the battle-field. We have a covenant with God not only, but a covenant with the State. Our obligations to Him enforce our obligations to the Government. This also belongs to us, as one of "the things revealed." "The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." These are "the words of

this law" that we are to do. It is as plainly a sacred duty to give and labor and fight, as to be thankful and to pray. It is the need of the Nation. Sacred next to our faith and our God we should hold that flag of the free, and defend it with "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honors." It needs defense, this very hour; such as open coffers, and flowing sympathies, and fired hearts, and strong arms can give it. Thus will it be borne aloft and forward to victory. In the name of our holy religion, and by all your love of freedom—as you value the best government God ever blessed the world with, as you would keep shining this beacon-light among the nations, as you would be true to your trust, your country and your God—I urge you to prove equal to the glorious calling of his providence, and to heed the voice that comes to us in trumpet tones from the lurid cloud of war. Let us all leave the secret things that belong to the Lord, and address ourselves to the duties of the hour. With our whole hearts and with God, let us save the Republic! Our trust must cease to be in an arm of flesh. But praying as if the work were God's, let us toil and sacrifice and give and fight and die as if it were ours. Oh, that I could shout the watchword from congregation to congregation this Thanksgiving morning, from city to city, from hamlet to hamlet, until it came as an inspiration to every loyal heart in the land, *Freemen of the North! Sons of Liberty! Patriots! Christians!* AROUSE! FIRST TO YOUR ALTARS, AND THEN TO THE BATTLE-FIELD! FIRST FOR GOD, AND THEN FOR YOUR COUNTRY!